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PUBLICATIONS

Subscriptions. An annual subscription (payable yearly in advance) of 60 pence, or three shillings, covers the annual publications of the Institute. Annual subscription $3.00 or 50.00 francs in the Belgium. The Chicago University Press, Agents, or The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, U. S. A.

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The Universal Church and Kirche im Zeichen der Synaxis.

Dr. Lewis, Tübingen, Germany.

1. **News Letter**, quarterly in English, French and German, of the activities of the Council and Institute (gratis).

2. **The Churches and the Welfare of Season.** Studies and Documents. English series No. 3 (gratis).

3. **The Churches and Present-day Economic Problems.** Studies and Documents. English series No. 4. Price 6d. or 20 cents a copy. I.C.F. Book Shop, 4, The Sanctuary, London, S.W.1, or The Social Institute, 2, rue de Monbrion, Geneva.

4. **Handbook of the Churches.** In three languages, price 2/-, or 2.50 Swiss fr., post free, the International Christian Press Commission, Berlin-Wilmersdorf, Germany.

5. **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Continuation Committee,** Edinburgh, Scotland, 1920. (With reports of the Commissions on Youth, Press, Churches and Labour, Co-operation, the Theologian's Commission, Reorganization of the Secretariat. Also the new Constitution and Bye-laws of the Council.) English, German and French editions.

All the publications mentioned in this letter may be obtained at the Institute.

NEWS LETTER No. 5

8TH January, 1932 (Reprint invited. Acknowledgement will be appreciated.)

UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL FOR LIFE AND WORK

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN SOCIAL INSTITUTE

GENEVA, 2, RUE DE MONTCHOISY Tel. 27.060 Telegrams & Cables: Kirchenbund, Geneva.

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THE NEW YEAR.

The News Letter greets its readers on entering its second year of existence. This organ, issued first of all as an experiment, has amply justified itself and will continue to be issued without charge. It is our purpose to bring the results for our activities before the workers in the Churches as well as the Churches themselves.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS.

The Christian Churches the world over follow with the greatest concern the increasing state of depression in the economic life of the nations. They are witnesses to the ever more embittered struggle of large masses of people for their daily bread; they are witnesses to the efforts, too often defeated, in every phase of business and industrial life to keep up the opportunities for work; they are witnesses to the gradual lowering within entire nations of the standard of living achieved through great national efforts and long perseverance; and last, but not least, they are witnesses to the growing sense of hopelessness even with the most active and alert type of people in face of the difficulties towering up before us and which almost seem to be altogether beyond human control. The Churches realise how these manifold sufferings and hardships and the resulting confusion bring an untold number of people to a point where they lose or reject the Christian faith.

The Churches are deeply thankful for all the work that has been undertaken to mitigate the need of the suffering. In every country affected by the present crisis

the Churches have laboured to bring home to their members the responsibilities which this distress imposes on them as Christians, and they have been able to minister to many in their trials, and to guide them in their judgment as to the meaning of the present situation.

It is, however, a matter of great concern to the Churches that the extension of the crisis threatens to paralyze, if not to destroy altogether, the possibility, to say nothing of the willingness, for effective help, and that those who have been brought into misery and suffering may become the prey of loneliness, embitterment, and hatred.

The Churches are not unaware of the fact that the responsible leaders in industry and government in all countries are busy studying ways and means to bring the world-wide economic crisis to an end. They are glad to see that the deeper causes of the present crisis are coming to be more fully realized and understood. They welcome especially all efforts tending to bring about concerted action of the great industrial nations.

On the other hand, the Churches are under the impression that this world solidarity is far from having been tested and established as it should, and they fully share the conviction of the nations and, in particular, the distressed masses that quick action is an absolute necessity. Especially do they believe that every attempt at a comprehensive economic solution is at the present moment to a large extent paralysed and doomed to failure on account of the political world situation, and that the future of the world's economic life under present conditions largely depends on the political course chosen by the principal nations of the world. For this reason they would again impress on the minds and consciences of the statesmen of the nations the immense responsibility and opportunity with which they are invested by this very fact, especially in view of the forthcoming Disarmament Conference. The world longs for a real stabilisation of peace, and there is hope, once this is assured, that the fundamental economic reforms may then be entered upon with some confidence in ultimate economic recovery.

Since the Great War the danger that what remains of the solidarity grown up during centuries between the nations may the lost has never been so great as at the present moment when unity of action alone can save the world from utter disaster. The Churches challenge all people in all walks of life, and especially all Christian people, to do everything in their power to combat this danger, to win over the public opinion of the world to a more enlightened understanding of the present world situation, and thus to help in bringing about a strong determination and unified action to overcome the crisis.

Joint Presidents:

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The foregoing statement was prepared in accordance with the decision taken at Cambridge by the Executive Committee of the Universal Council. The developments within the last few months of the world's economic crisis has put into still greater relief the connection between certain definite phenomena or sets of phenomena as described in this document. This justified the Research Department of the Institute in focussing its interest on those questions which the latest phases of the crisis show to be of vital importance and particular urgency. These facts are being given special attention in the preparation of the International Study Conference on Unemployment. These preparatory studies deal, in addition to the basic problems of the economic effects of rationalisation and of export and credit policy, with the relation between the present world crisis and the facts of the world's total, war-created indebtedness. In pursuing these studies, one question appeared more and more to dominate all others; viz., the effect of world indebtedness caused by the war upon the present economic world situation. Recently published investigations have established the astounding fact that, including the inner debts incurred during the war (the various war loans, etc.), and taking into account the reductions caused by inflation, the breakdown of many European States, and the cutting down of debts, the world's war indebtedness at the present moment totals approximately 50 billion dollars ($50,000,000,000). This colossal sum, which the nations of the world must refund and pay interest on, constitutes a dead-weight on the world's economic system which would seem to be, far more than any other single factor or combination of factors, the real cause of the crisis and the progressive paralysis of the economic structure of the world. It appears that these other supposed causes were themselves merely an aggregate result of this primary cause—an unheard-of, dead-weight of debts. It is impossible to enter farther into this question here. The Research Department is making it the object of special studies, however, with a view to preparing the ground for further action.

CHRISTIANS AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

The following report will give an impression as to what attitude the Institute and the Stockholm Movement are adopting, with a view to possible action, in regard to the fundamental causes, both of a theoretical and practical nature, of the world's economic crisis:

REPORT OF THE SECOND SOCIAL STUDY WEEK.

The Members of the second Social Study Week, organised by the Youth Commission of the Universal Council of Life and Work, met at Geneva from the 22nd to 28th September, 1931, representing France, Germany, Great Britain, Malta, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland, and having discussed, with the help of experts and from the Christian standpoint, causes and effects of the unemployment situation and the main remedies agreed on the following findings:

Reasons why Christians should be concerned with Unemployment.

(1) The unemployment situation leads to suffering and despair. It inflicts social indignity upon the unemployed and a general economic and moral confusion upon the whole community.

(2) The economic paradox of impoverishment amidst plenty is irrational, and therefore sows in men's minds doubt about Divine Providence.

(3) This paradoxical situation, in which it is more and more difficult to fix responsibility, raises the problem of evil in a discouraging instead of a challenging way, and makes it increasingly difficult to find clear moral issues in social life.

(4) It leads to a widespread feeling that events at the present time are beyond the possible control of the mind and will of man. Where man turns his victory over nature into a social calamity, the supremacy of the spirit over secular events is doubted and the whole psychological basis of religion is in danger.

Causes.

We can assert that the causes of unemployment are closely bound up with the economic separation of peoples who constitute themselves into so many self-contained economic systems hostile to one another.

Unemployment, whether cyclical (due to over-capitalisation) or technological (due to rationalisation) derives from the same cause which constitutes the underlying principle of the present system.

The present economic policy promotes an inversion of means and ends, leading to a mistaken pursuit of production at the expense of consumption.

The problems of gold, of the mechanism of credit, of international indebtedness (including war debts) which some members believe to be due to defects in the monetary system, are acute and paralysing symptoms of the same policy.

Unemployment is therefore due less to a determinism of economic laws, than to a defective use of the resources of the world, whether raw materials, capital goods or human labour.

Remedies.

All plans or measures which may be found to help, either nationally or internationally, towards the reduction of unemployment and the solution of the leisure-time problem should be carefully studied by the Churches and other Christian Bodies and given every support and encouragement. The following are specially commended:

(*a*) Systematic development of a public labour exchange service in the various countries as well as internationally, and furthermore of the plans and the work already undertaken by the League of Nations and the International Labour Office.

(*b*) Development of Unemployment Insurance, which must be adapted to the special needs obtaining in the various countries; complementary voluntary service by private organisations to meet particular and exceptional cases.

(*c*) Systematic policy of provision and work through Public Works, as far as these are necessary from the point of view of public interest and do not throw upon the community unsound financial obligations; sympathetic study and encouragement of the projects for international co-operation in this field as prepared by the I.L.O.;

(*d*) New regulation of the questions relating to the length of working time, including such problems as the reduction of working time, raising of the school-leaving age, fixing of a minimum age for the admission of children to employment, paid holidays, the system of " unemployment shifts " (groups of workers being *in turn* and in fixed periods put on work and out of work), voluntary labour service for unemployed, etc.

(*e*) National and international regulation of migration; removal of immigration restrictions; opening up and exploitation in common of possibilities for work which has not been made use of.

(*f*) Projects and measures studied or adopted by the League of Nations in the field of tariff policy and in particular of an international credit policy.

Although all of these measures deserve every support both for practical reasons and reasons of principle, the facts must not be lost sight of that they have their natural limitations and especially that much hardship is wrought by them; they are not capable of solving the present social economic crisis and the unemployment problem either on the national or the international plane; and, furthermore, they carry with them hardships the mitigation or over-coming of which should be a special concern to the Churches and Christian organisations.

In connection with this the question of a new economic order was raised, since the present order is in many points conflicting with the religious and moral principles of Christianity. As to the nature of such a new economic order, opinions were divided. There was however, general agreement on this, that a new economic order must reckon with the realities of human nature and cannot be possibly built up on the fiction of an ideal human being; there was also general agreement as to the necessity for comprehensive preparatory studies and experiments to bring about a new order.

The Problem re-stated.

The Conference finds it necessary to distinguish between the two following factors which are often confused:

(1) The diminishing demand for human labour in industry which is inherent in the use of natural power, technical appliances and scientific processes in production and distribution. This should be regarded as an achievement, a liberation of mankind from absorption in the economic struggle.

(2) The present unemployment situation, which has turned this possible achievement into a social fear by depriving a growing section of the community of employment which is their only title to wealth. While the resources of industry do not make a larger volume of unemployment necessary for production, an increase in employment is for the unemployed a necessary condition of independent livelihood.

From this distinction, the Conference concludes that:

Christians must cease to state the problem as one of creating work. They have to see it as a part of the irrational problem of poverty in a world of abundance. One of the symptoms of the unemployment situation is the failure of industry to sell its goods, and the problem should primarily be stated as one of enabling the productive system to deliver to the community the goods and services which it is capable of delivering and which consumers desire, with the amount and quality of employment required for that end.

One section of the Conference believes that the solution of this problem depends upon a fundamental change in the distributory mechanism of money, and regards such a change as necessary so that, all causes of unemployment which lie in the failure of distribution being removed, we may be left to face only the unemployment which arises from changes in production.

We should then be able to deal with the second problem, which is to secure to the whole community a share of this labour-saving achievement. This involves the question of making a reduction of work, either by shorter hours or a shorter working life, financially possible as improvements in technique now allow.

The Church's task then seems to be two-fold:

First, to insist that society find a way by which the needs of human beings, and not the necessity of employment, be the deciding factor in the policy of production and commerce, and that, if necessary, it adjust its theory of money and the conditions under which men acquire money to that end.

Secondly, to equip herself to provide guidance for the use of that leisure which the present stage of economic development can give to men. Much teaching is necessary to free the Christian doctrine of work and of the good life from the peculiar interpretation of them which industrialism has imposed upon the modern world. The Church is especially fitted to give guidance in the right use of what God has given through Nature and the skill of men, and the Church must be ready to indicate the various forms of social responsibility and opportunity man can exercise as a spiritual being, apart from those imposed by economic activity.

* * *

The deliberations of the Study Week started with a discussion of a paper presented by Dr. Schönfeld, on the nature, extent and effects of unemployment. Various delegates reported on the situation obtaining in different countries. The discussion on the causes of unemployment was based on two papers by Prof. G. Lasserre, of the University of Lille, and Dr. D. C. Tait, of the International Labour Office, on the present economic system and economic cycles, and on the maladjustment between production and consumption, with special regard to rationalisation. Miss Mc Geachy, of the Information Office of the League, and Mr. Tait spoke on the international attempts at a solution proposed by the League and the International Labour Organisation, and Dr. Schönfeld on

the efforts and possibilities in this direction within the nations. The Rev. V. A. Demant Director of Research of the British Christian Social Council, made a most important contribution in his paper on the responsibility of the Christian in face of Unemployment. His views held the members of the group under their spell from the very beginning.

Multigraphed copies of all the papers, including the report, can be obtained from the Administrative Department at 10 cents or 6d. the complete set (in English).

The report is sent out to all Youth Organisations and Youth Leaders known to us in the hope that it will stimulate thought and bring about a close co-operation.

THE SWISS CHURCHES AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

The Swiss Evangelical Church Federation has just published the result of the Study Conference on Unemployment which was held under its auspices, under the title " The Church and Unemployment ". The Commission formed for this purpose consisted of representatives of the Federation, economists, industrialists and representatives of Labour and Agriculture. The report first surveys the unemployment situation of the country. In another section the causes of, and remedies for, unemployment are dealt with along the lines of the report submitted to the Administrative Council of the I.L.O. by the International Commission on Unemployment. In the section dealing with the Churches and Unemployment, special attention is given to the question of monetary policy, and to the problem of the choice of a profession. In the concluding section the desiderata and tasks of the Churches in relation to economic policy are formulated.

The Congress of Latin Countries for Social Christianity, which was held in Geneva in September 1931 with representatives from Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland, has led to the formation of a permanent organisation, the Christian Social Federation of Latin Countries. The Minutes of the First Congress of Social Christianity of the Latin Countries have just been published in a volume entitled "Christianisme Social et Problèmes Contemporains " (Publishers of *Le Christianisme Social*, 2, rue Balay, St-Etienne, Loire, France, and *Labor*, 4, rue de l'Athénée, Geneva). The Congress has among other things occupied itself with the question of a new regulation of working time and effective international economic co-operation.

The outline for an **Oecumenical Seminar** in Geneva (from the middle of July to the middle of August) was commended by the Executive Committee of the Universal Christian Council. The Faculty of Geneva University assumed the patronage. More details will be given in the next News Letter.

THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE.

Soon after the appearance of this News-Letter, there will be held in Geneva the most important world conference since the war-on February 2nd-the long-expected and well-prepared Conference on Disarmament. A number of Christian organisations have formed a Joint Committee to keep in close touch with the Conference and will

send news items from time to time to the Churches and the religious press of the world.

The Federal Council of Churches of America is in active and vital co-operation with the U.C.C. and is represented both in Council's Committee and Secretariat. The Federal Council is keenly interested in the Disarmament Conference and at its last Executive Committee meeting it voted to ask Dr.Atkinson to act in Geneva as its special representative.

THE REVIEW "STOCKHOLM" AND NEW PAMPHLETS.

The difficulties of publishing a tri-lingual review especially in the present circumstances have compelled us to discontinue the review *Stockholm,* and in its place to prepare a series of study pamphlets. Some of the information given in the review will also appear in the News Letter. During the next few months the following pamphlets will be printed:

1. Church and World: the Basis of a Christian Sociology.
2. Discussion arising from pamphlet No. 1.
3. The proceedings of the International Study Conference at Basle on unemployment.

PRESENT PUBLICATIONS.

1. **News Letter,** quarterly in English, French and German, of the activities of the Council and Institute (gratis).
2. **Memorial Pamphlet** to the late Archbishop of Upsala. Limited edition (gratis).
3. **The Churches and the Welfare of Seamen.** Studies and documents. English series No. 3 (gratis).
4. **The Churches and Present-day Economic Problems.** Studies and Documents. English series No. 4. Price 6*d.* or 20 cents a copy. I.C.F. Book Shop, 4, The Sanctuary, London, S.W. 1; or The Social Institute, 2, Rue de Montchoisy, Geneva.